THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The Shipping Corporation of India Ltd. (SCI) Officers held meetings with the leaders of Forward Seamen's Union of India (FSUI) requesting them to withdraw the strike since policy decision of the Government regarding disinvestment of SCI can not be reversed. Further, SCI also sent message to the controlling officers of all their vessels to the effect that the proposed strike would be illegal as per Merchant Shipping Act and the crew shall also be liable to be penalised, besides attracting usual penal provision of No work No pay. However, the workers Union proceeded with the strike.

(d) Does not arise.

Surplus money with major port trusts

408. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

(a) the surplus money available with major port trusts;

(b) whether it is a fact that they don't pay any taxes;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) what Government intend to do with the surplus money available with the port trusts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) The surplus money with major port trusts varies from time to time depending upon the surplus that they generate and their commitments, requirement of funds. During the financial year 2000-01, net surplus of major port trusts is Rs. 101.87 crores.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. Major Port Trusts are treated as local authorities under the General Clauses Act, 1897 and have thus been exempted from payment of income tax.

(d) The Government does not earn any income from major ports. The funds available with port trusts are utilized for development and modernisation aimed at additional capacity creation and other commitments.